

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THE IMPACT ON NATIONAL SECURITY FOR THE
UNITED STATES**

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ABSTRACT

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Human trafficking like prostitution has been around for many years. It is a fact that more money than one can imagine has been made selling humans to the highest bidder. It is also a fact that money made from human trafficking finds its way into the hands of drug lords. Drug lords then turn around and give the money to support terrorist activities. This could not have been made more evident to the United States than on September 11, 2001. What can the United States' with the help of the United Nations do about countries actively involved in human trafficking?

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THE IMPACT ON NATIONAL SECURITY FOR THE UNITED STATES

In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln and the United States Congress ratified the 13th Amendment of the Constitution which states neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall exist within the United States.¹ Over the past decade, trafficking in human beings has reached epidemic proportions. No country is immune, including the United States. Traffickers operate in our own country, stalking our own citizens, especially our children. “The U. S. State Department’s 2005 Report on Human Trafficking estimates that between 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year and almost 20,000 are trafficked across U.S. borders alone.”² What is more disturbing than that number is that half of all trafficking victims are children under the age of eighteen. United States law enforcement has documented cases of Latvian girls trafficked into sexual slavery in Chicago, or Ukrainian girls trafficked in Los Angeles, and Maryland, or Thai, Korean, Malaysian and Vietnamese girls trafficked in Georgia, or Mexican girls trafficked in California, New Jersey and Florida. Like slave owners of the past, modern traffickers use violence, threats, intimidation, and physical restraint to keep slaves at their tasks. Yet modern human trafficking seems even more harmful than slavery of the past, in part because it is part of transnational organized crime. “Human trafficking is considered to be the third-largest source of criminal income worldwide, generating an estimated \$9.5 billion per year. It is also closely linked with “money laundering, document forgery, drug trafficking and international terrorism.”³

This trade in human beings brings suffering to the innocent and shame to our country.⁴ Sex-trafficking has sadly become a global issue and is one of the most gruesome of human rights violations. This is an issue that isn’t discussed at the dinner table, on television, or even in magazines – an issue of which, sadly, most people aren’t even aware. The American government has a particular duty to act because human trafficking is a direct threat to our National Security – “monies made from human trafficking are linked to funding terrorist activities.”⁵

The History of Human Trafficking

What is the definition of human trafficking? Is it Slavery? According to the definition given by the United Nations, trafficking “involves the movement of people through violence, deception or coercion for the purpose of forced labor, servitude or slavery-like practices.”⁶ It is known as slavery because traffickers use violence, threats, and other forms of coercion to force their victims to work against their will. This includes controlling their freedom of movement, where

and when they will work and what pay, if any, they will receive. Their life no longer belongs to them but now belongs to the trafficker who is holding them against their will. Human trafficking is not new. What is new is the “global sophistication, complexity and control of how women and children are trafficked from/to/in all parts of the globe.”⁷

As defined by the United Nations human trafficking is:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery or servitude.⁸

Lucrative Business

There is no doubt that profits made from human trafficking are enormous. Slave traffickers around the world have rediscovered how profitable it is to buy and sell people. The United Nations believes that the trafficking of human beings is now the third largest source of money for organized crime, after arms and drugs.⁹ It has become the world’s fastest growing criminal enterprise, an estimated \$9.5 billion per year. The commodities involved in this illicit trade are men, women, and children and the trafficker’s goal is to maximize profits. The sale and distribution of trafficked humans in the U.S. is a global, regional, and national problem.¹⁰

Attracted by huge profits made at minimal risks to the trafficker, criminal organizations at all levels are now involved with this heinous crime. The fall of communism, coupled with deteriorating third world economies, has fueled the dramatic rise of this form of commerce.¹¹ An ounce of cocaine wholesale is \$1200 but you can only sell it once, a woman or child \$50-\$1000 but you can sell them each day over and over and over again (30 to 40 customers a day), and the markup is unbelievable.¹² Trafficking humans – especially children...enables these international mobsters to play in the wider field...of trafficking drugs, weapons, arms, chemicals, toxic waste, and even piracy on the high seas. Research substantiates indisputable links between human trafficking and organized criminal syndicates the world over.¹³

Trafficking ranges from local, homespun networks to international organized crime operations. Traffickers are motivated by self-enrichment. A steady flow of income, the relative lack of low depreciation in human capital, and the luxury of not having to make large initial investments all contribute to a low-risk economic venture.

Trafficking Linked With Terrorism

Is there a link between terrorism and human trafficking? According to Christine Dolan, panelist at the recent "Terrorism Nexus" seminar hosted by The World Affairs Council of Washington, DC, the answer is a definitive, yes.¹⁴

Trafficking and terrorism are linked. Terrorists use the transportation networks of smugglers and traffickers to move operatives. In many parts of the world, profits from drug trading provide funds for terrorism, and in certain regions of the world trafficking is a large and significant component of that economy. Examples of this include the Balkans, Southeast Asia, Philippines and parts of the former Soviet Union. In the Balkans, trafficking is a major source of profits for organized crime groups which have links to terrorists. In Southeast Asia and the Philippines, trafficking is significant enabling potential terrorists to move their money easily through the channels of the illicit economy.¹⁵

The national and international enforcement environment changed significantly after the September 11, 2001 attacks. Today the conditions could be right for terrorist and human smugglers to join forces. Emphasis is now being placed on targeting alien smuggling organizations that present threats to our national security. This emphasis recognizes that terrorists and their associates are likely to align themselves with specific alien smuggling networks to obtain undetected entry into the United States. Three factors have created an environment in which terrorists and smuggling enterprises may combine their criminal efforts to pose a significant national and international threat. These factors include the fact that the criminal organizations involved are growing in volume and sophistication; and those same organizations' developing the ability to exploit public corruption; and lax immigration controls in source and transit countries.¹⁶

The thread of trafficking runs through Al Qaeda's tapestry of terror. Since the start of the war in Afghanistan, reports have indicated that the Taliban engaged in open abduction of women and girls, taking them as war booty. There are numerous accounts of forced marriages, rapes, women and girls forced to act as concubines, and numerous killings. Many of those girls who were not used as concubines were sold as sexual slaves to wealthy Arabs through contacts arranged by the Al Qaeda terrorist network. Proceeds from these sales allegedly helped keep the cash-strapped Taliban afloat.¹⁷ In the National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002, President Bush wrote that "*the United States will continue to work with our allies to disrupt the financing of terrorism. We will identify and block the sources of funding for terrorism.*"¹⁸

John P. Torres, deputy assistant director for smuggling and public safety at the United States Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), told the House Judiciary subcommittee on immigration, border security and claims that human smuggling and trafficking into the United States constituted a “significant risk to national security and public safety.”¹⁹ He further stated that well-established smuggling and trafficking pipelines serve as a way for illegal aliens and criminals seeking entry into this country, many of whom easily could have been exploited by terrorist and extremist organizations looking to carry out violent acts. The United States is a primary target destination for smugglers and traffickers, which means that literally tens of thousands of men, women and children are entering this nation illegally each year – undocumented, undetected and unprotected. Untraced profits feed organized-crime activities, undermine government action and the rule of law, while allowing criminal networks to grow stronger, more resilient and more dangerous.²⁰

The road to the “American Dream” for many illegal immigrants usually leads from home countries through Mexico and then into the United States. Although almost all of these illegal immigrants are merely looking for a better life for themselves and their families, world-wide human trafficking routes provide opportunity for those wishing harm to the United States easy access. In spite of international efforts to break up these human smuggling routes, there are still a number of avenues available whereby the potential terrorist can enter the United States.²¹ One of the most common routes is through Havana, Cuba where terrorists could be provided with false documents such as Central American or even European passports.²²

A number of Arabs, Middle Easterners, and other Muslims are still using Central America and parts of South America as jumping off points. With the break-up of a number of human trafficking organizations specializing in Middle Easterners and Arabs, illegal immigrants (to include potential terrorists) have had to look for other avenues for entering the United States. Two conceivable avenues of entry are: 1) the current Salafi network in Mexico which currently runs from the southernmost state of Chiapas to the northern Mexican border (many of the elements of this Islamic network are located at or near the train lines of the Transportacion Maritima Mexicana and the Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana. These elements could provide any needed support to potential terrorists traveling via rail); and 2) The Mara Salvatrucha, a violent gang with no allegiance to any country or cause except their gang. Because they control the rail lines through Mexico, terrorists wishing to use the trains as a way of entering the United States must do business with the Mara Salvatrucha.²³

Factors Promoting Sex Tourism

Governments and international organizations have begun to recognize trafficking as a growing and pernicious evil. As it has now come to be seen as a source of funding for crime and terror, governments and other organizations have begun to attack the factors that support it.²⁴ Listed below are a few factors that promote sex tourism:

- Men's demand for the sex of prostitution
- Increasing poverty, driving women and children into situations of sexual exploitation.
- Predatory recruiters who take advantage of this poverty to recruit women into the sex industry
- Repressive immigration policies that cast traffickers in the role of major international players who facilitate global migration
- Military presence which generates sex industries in many parts of the world that are tolerated by governments, including our own, as rest and recreation venues for the troops
- Racial myths and stereotypes that promote sexual exploitation, for example, in tourism brochures and on the Internet, advertising "exotic women for sexual pleasures" abroad
- Globalization of the economy which means globalization of the sex industry, as it becomes an industry without borders. Large and small scale trafficking networks operate across borders, actively recruiting girls and women, especially from villages, city streets, and transportation centers. Hotels, airlines, and charter companies, often with direct and indirect government collusion and corruption, are involved in the trafficking of women for sex tourism.²⁵

Attacking the Problem

As in our war on terrorism, the most effective means of addressing these issues is by attacking the problem in source and transit countries thereby preventing entry into the United States. The strategy to address human trafficking requires intelligence-driven investigations against major violators, specifically targeting organizations with ties to countries that support terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda.²⁶ A future anti-trafficking strategy should include a more in-depth study and analysis of the operations of different trafficking organizations as forms of organized crime, a more in-depth study and analysis of the links between transnational crime and terrorism operate in the operational and financial sides of the business, greater efforts to address the facilitators of trafficking activities, and greater international cooperation in

addressing trafficking. This includes coordination of laws, investigations and the seizure of crime proceeds, greater efforts to seize the profits of traffickers and use them for assistance and development, and greater educational programs for the public and the business sector on how they may be contributing to the problem of trafficking through its involvement with the legitimate economy.²⁷

What Has Our Federal Government Done So Far?

During a recent conference on Human Trafficking, President Bush stated that “human trafficking is one of the worst offenses against human dignity. Our nation is determined to fight that crime abroad and at home.”²⁸ There is good news and, of course, bad news. First, some of the good news, the FBI and prosecutors are arresting and charging some traffickers. In 2001, Congress passed, and President Clinton signed, Public Law 106-386, the “Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000,” a bill that includes both the reauthorized “Violence against Women Act” and the new “Trafficking Victims Protection Act.”

The Protect Act allows U.S. law enforcement to prosecute Americans who travel abroad and engage in sex with minors without having to prove prior intent. Under the Protect Act, United States citizens or residents who engage in sexual activity abroad with a child under 18 can face 30 years in a U.S. prison. United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement is now actively investigating American sex tourists abroad and making arrests.²⁹

This new law requires that our government produce annual reports on trafficking by countries that receive foreign assistance from the United States, requires the creation of an interagency task force to monitor and combat trafficking, requires that protection and assistance be given to the victims of trafficking, establishes minimum standards and provides assistance to other countries to meet these standards for elimination of trafficking, requires that action be taken against governments that fail to meet the standards and requires strengthening the means to prosecute traffickers. Secretary Of State Colin Powell expressed a powerful commitment to ending sexual trafficking when he announced the release of the State Department’s first report on trafficking in persons.

At the United Nations last year, President Bush pledged \$50 million to support the human trafficking efforts in 2005. He stated that every nation that fights human trafficking has a friend in the United States.³⁰ The United States is also confronting nations that profit from or tolerate human trafficking. Those countries face potential sanctions that include the loss of United States military and economic assistance, as well as the loss of support from the World Bank and the IMF.³¹ Every nation that is complicit in human trafficking can know that the United States

government is watching and there will be consequences if they don't act. As we fight the trade in human beings abroad, we have also launched an unprecedented domestic effort to deal with this problem at home. Our approach combines aggressive law enforcement action that means putting people in jail with compassionate outreach to the victims. The message to traffickers is becoming clear: If you are caught, you're going to spend time in jail.³²

We are also taking action to help the victims, and that's a really important part of the strategy. One of the ways traffickers keep women and girls enslaved is by telling them they will be arrested and deported if they try to run away. That tool of coercion has been weakened by treating the victims of trafficking, not as illegal aliens, but as refugees. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act carried a special class of visas called T-Visas that allowed trafficking victims to remain in the United States and receive the same services and counseling that are provided to refugees.³³ America should not tolerate slave traders who bring women and children into our country for abuse. We should also not tolerate American citizens abusing innocent children abroad. Sex tourism is an estimated billion dollar a year business worldwide. No American should have any part of it. Work is being done with governments in Southeast Asia to crack down on pedophile sex tourism – and many nations in that region have made progress.³⁴ There is also a problem ninety miles off our shores, where the regime of Fidel Castro has turned Cuba into a major destination for sex tourism. A recent study by the Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University found that Cuba has “replaced Southeast Asia as a destination for pedophiles and sex tourists.” As restrictions on travel to Cuba were eased during the 1990s, the study found that American and Canadian tourists contributed to the sharp increase in child prostitution in Cuba.³⁵

Last summer the Department of Homeland Security launched Operation Predator, a comprehensive effort to protect children from international sex tourists and traffickers and pornography and prostitution rings.³⁶ For the first time, countries that do not take actions to stop human trafficking could face the loss of United States assistance, though the government can waive any penalties. The sanctions would take effect Oct 1. Fifteen countries, including United States allies Greece and Turkey, have made no significant efforts to stop trafficking in humans and may face sanctions.³⁷ In addition to Greece and Turkey, the countries facing sanctions are Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burma, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Haiti, Kazakhstan, Liberia, North Korea, Sudan, Suriname and Uzbekistan. One of the key components of the law is the creation of the Trafficking in Persons Report. The Department of State produces this annual report assessing government response in each country with a

significant number of victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons. Countries in the annual report are rated in tiers, based on government efforts to combat trafficking.³⁸

What Do the Tiers of the Trafficking in Persons Report Mean?

- Tier 1: Countries that fully comply with the act's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.
- Tier 2: Countries that do not fully comply with the minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance.
- Tier 2 Watch List: Countries on Tier 2 requiring special scrutiny because of a high or significant increasing number of victims; failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat trafficking in persons; or an assessment as Tier 2 based on commitments to take action over the next year.
- Tier 3: Countries that neither satisfy the minimum standards nor demonstrate a significant effort to come into compliance. Countries in this tier are subject to potential non-humanitarian and non-trade sanctions.³⁹

The Department of State is required by law to submit this report each year to Congress on foreign governments' efforts to eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons. So far five reports have been submitted.⁴⁰ This report is intended to raise global awareness and spur foreign governments to take effective actions to counter all forms of trafficking in persons. The "Trafficking in Persons Report" has increasingly focused the efforts of a growing community of nations to share information and to partner in new and important ways to fight human trafficking. A country that fails to take significant actions to bring itself into compliance with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons receives a negative "Tier 3" assessment in this Report. Such an assessment could trigger the withholding of non-humanitarian, non-trade-related assistance from the United States to that country. In assessing foreign governments' efforts, the TIP Report highlights the "three P's", prosecution, protection and prevention.⁴¹

Military Involvement

Both the United States Army and UN peacekeeping forces have recently experienced embarrassments suggesting an unacceptable relationship between trafficked women and their Soldiers abroad. There are movements afoot that hold the promise of removing deployed military personnel as a significant factor in the demand for trafficked women.⁴²

Zero-Tolerance Policy

Military personnel deployed away from home have been a long-standing source of demand for sexual services from local populations. Today, the United States has nearly 250,000 members of its military forces deployed in combat and peacekeeping operations around the world. If you add the number of service members who are stationed overseas, there are nearly 350,000 Americans stationed in nearly 130 countries around the world. These large numbers may tend to make deployed U.S. military personnel one of the largest sources of demand for sexual services around the world, some of which would likely be provided by trafficked women.⁴³ The role of military forces deployed abroad has come to be seen as a strong component of the demand for trafficked women, which in today's world is increasingly unacceptable to modern governments and the international organizations in which they participate. It is perhaps fortunate that the United States and United Nations have both suffered embarrassing revelations about the demand their deployed troops create for trafficked persons, particularly prostitutes. Whether mutually or independently, they have reached the conclusion that they must ensure that their military personnel must not be complicit in, or facilitate in any way, the trade in trafficked persons.⁴⁴ The Department of Defense established a "zero-tolerance" policy, which prohibits U.S. troops and the contractors who support them from being "complicit in any way in the trafficking in persons. The zero-tolerance policy and expanded use of off-limits areas has been combined with an education campaign for all U.S. troops.⁴⁵ In February 2004, the President issued Executive Order 13257 establishing a task force to combat human trafficking.⁴⁶ On 15 September 2004 the Department of Defense's Joint Service Committee on Military Justice proposed several changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), a federal criminal code that applies to active duty military personnel worldwide, at all hours of the day, regardless of their deployment status. Under the UCMJ, U.S. military personnel can be tried for military offenses such as disrespect and failure to obey orders, as well as the more traditional criminal offenses. Among the proposals was a suggested new criminal offense of "patronizing a prostitute," intended to completely eliminate U.S. forces from the equation of demand for paid sexual services anywhere worldwide. Under the legislation, which became effective in January 2006, patronizing a prostitute would become a crime for all military personnel after 1 July 2005.

NATO

Like the United States, NATO sees training and education programs as being essential to reducing the engagement of prostitutes by NATO forces deployed abroad on NATO missions.

Appendix II to the NATO policy outlines specific requirements of such training programs, including predeployment training for all, and special training for commanders and for military police units. The policy's prohibition also applies to any civilian element accompanying such forces, including contractors.⁴⁷

Progress Is Real, and the Fight is Occurring on Many Fronts

- After fifteen countries were ranked in Tier 3 (the lowest category of a 1-3 scale) in the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report, ten took swift action to combat trafficking: passing national anti-trafficking legislation, instituting law enforcement training, engaging in public education, and making arrests.
- In FY02 and FY03, over \$54M in assistance was provided to more than 70 countries to strengthen anti-trafficking law enforcement, victim support, legislation, and regional cooperation.
- Tackling trafficking at home, the Justice Department has arrested eight United States citizens abroad for illegal sexual conduct with minors. 111 traffickers have been charged, nearly a three-fold increase compared to those charged in the previous three years. The Criminal Section has 142 open trafficking investigations.
- The Department of Health and Human Services certified 448 victims of trafficking allowing them to receive services to the same extent as refugees.
- HHS is currently developing a public outreach campaign to boost awareness of assistance available to victims. The target audience is local police and health practitioners.
- The Department of Labor has increased the focus worldwide on illegal child trafficking and work exploitation, dispersing nearly \$48 million for this purpose in 27 countries.
- The Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General completed two assessments of U.S. military compliance with the Administration's zero tolerance policy on activity that might fuel sex trafficking and prostitution in Korea and Bosnia/Kosovo. In early 2004, DOD issued a directive that outlines specific objectives, including anti-trafficking education requirements for all service members and DOD civilians. This training is called TIP (Trafficking in People). TIP has been a long standing problem throughout the world, especially in many overseas areas, but also on our home front. The issue is getting so large that it is now receiving special attention from Congress down. United States military personnel must now themselves become more aware of the causes and consequences of TIP, and take actions collectively to help combat this growing problem. The training takes 20-25 minutes. Upon completion a certificate is issued to the service member.

- New language is being adopted in DOD contracts for services overseas making trafficking-related prohibitions crystal clear.
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched Operation Predator last summer, a comprehensive effort to protect children from international sex tourists, traffickers, and prostitution rings using the full range of cyber, intelligence, investigative, and detention tools.
- Partnering with World Vision and ECPAT, DHS is putting law enforcement muscle behind the best efforts of international NGOs.
- The U.S. Agency for International Development implements anti-trafficking programs in over 40 countries supporting a wide range of anti-trafficking efforts including public education, victim protection through shelters and counseling, and legislative reform to strengthen prosecution of trafficking criminals.
- The Central Intelligence Agency has collected and coded new information, compiling a database for the 2004 TIP report.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Modern day slavery is only occurring because we choose to close our eyes to the problem! Human traffickers share a special kind of depravity, the will to exploit and hurt the most vulnerable members of society. Human traffickers rob children of their innocence and expose them to the worst of life before they have seen much of life. Traffickers tear families apart. And traffickers treat their victims as nothing more than goods and commodities for sale to the highest bidder.⁴⁹

The steps taken by the United States and NATO (and those recommended for the UN) are clearly a step in the right direction. The task at hand though, is not merely to give a brief training presentation before NATO troops deploy. It is to change the mindset of a whole society to the point where everyone sees human trafficking for what it is: a modern slave trade that fuels crime and instability and funds international terrorism.⁵⁰ Though much is being done to prevent human trafficking, there is still not enough being done to educate the people of the world about the horror of the problem. Education concerning human trafficking should begin with programs that are focused on sex slavery, with special emphasis directed at the males who are contributing to the problem by buying sexual services. Introducing our children to this subject as early as possible would in the long run be an effective preventive method. An education block on human trafficking could be added to school curriculums as part of sex education.

Countries need also to be required to implement tougher security and border controls to detect and prevent trafficking. Those controls should include strengthening borders, imposing

requirements on commercial carriers to check passports and visas, setting standards for the technical quality of passports and other travel documents and cooperation in establishing the validity of their own documents when used abroad.⁵¹ Human trafficking is a struggle for the lives and dignity of innocent women and children. And that is why all of us must be dedicated to the strategies that will help us prevail. Part of that strategy would be to include using the media. The media could play an indispensable role in educating the public about the many manifestations of global human trafficking, and they would be able to present the problem in terms that anyone could understand. Even though in many parts of the world media coverage is weak, and there here are some news media outlets that are not aware human trafficking, or they confuse trafficking with other issues such as illegal migration and alien smuggling, the media can still be and efficient weapon. The media's role is most effective when it:

- Illuminates the problem. By writing an article or airing a segment focusing on trafficking in persons, media not only educated the public but also shines a light on an issue typically shrouded in darkness.
- Provides a help line.
- Shames the perpetrators.⁵²

Human trafficking denies hundreds of thousands of people their basic human rights, poses a serious public health risk, and fuels organized crime around the world. It is a dark and uncomfortable subject, but one that must be illuminated.⁵³ Trafficking can only be eliminated through combined efforts at national, regional and international levels.⁵⁴ When dealing with an issue of this importance and urgency, time is of the utmost essence. The world must come together to act as one in this regard. The world must stop the criminals and terrorists from using human trafficking as a resource, but even more importantly, the world must stop human trafficking in the name of common decency. The United States is asking governments to immediately take action to step up their anti-trafficking efforts; President Bush has made the fight against slavery an American priority. In a September, 2003 speech he made to the United Nations, President Bush called slavery, "A special evil in the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent." He further declared: "Those who patronize this industry debase themselves and deepen the misery of others." Governments that tolerate this trade are tolerating a form of slavery.⁵⁵ The toleration of human trafficking by any individual or government is an evil that must be erased from the face of the earth. Nothing less will suffice.

Endnotes

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